



Fine pearls and
other jewelry

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Parents say 'no' to school

Fed up with what they see as a failure of the public education system, these Beijing parents have decided to take a hands-on approach to their children's education through home schooling. **Read more on Page 22**



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Designing dragons

Famous designers are competing to create works that contrast Asian dragons with foreign interpretations.



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Couple bikes to test their love

A young French couple rode from Paris to Beijing on a tandem bicycle, recording children's dreams along the way.



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Hotel tests new sustainable model

The Linden Centre in Xizhou, Yunnan Province is a creative attempt at sustainable tourism and cultural exchange.

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Economists forecast big slowdown

The national economy will slow in the coming five years, with an expected average annual growth rate of 8 percent, said a senior official on Wednesday.

Lu Zhongyuan, vice president of the Development Research Center of the State Council, said at a press briefing that this year's slowdown to 9 percent was consistent with macro-control policies, which helped ease inflation, save energy and reduce emissions.

From January to September, the economy grew only 9 percent, Lu said, adding that annual growth was expected to be higher.

"This will support the recovery of the world economy and efforts

to avoid a double-dip recession," Lu said.

Slower growth rates will actually help China contain rising prices and adjust the country's economic structure, as well as improve energy consumption and emission reduction, he said.

Concerns of the economy having a hard landing were overblown, he said, stating that recent slowdowns were within the "normal range."

The national economy has grown by 9 to 10 percent each year on average, with a normal fluctuation range of between 8 and 12 percent in the past 30 years.

"We envision that household

spending will increase and the urban-rural income gap will narrow. If the restructuring progress goes well, we expect to see a rise in the service sector, as well as decreased energy dependency and carbon emissions," he said.

More priority should be given to the quality and sustainability of growth and ensuring the people see more tangible benefits, Lu said.

China's economic potential is propped up by a set of positive factors, he said, such as accelerating industrialization and urbanization, expanding household spending and robust investment and consumption.

But he warned that climbing costs of labor, land and other resources, coupled with the aging population, will undermine the country's low-cost advantage that has made it so attractive to foreign businesses.

The Chinese economy still faces multiple challenges, such as the uncertainty of the US and European economic recoveries, rising inflation, emerging financial risks in local governance and tightening monetary policies, he said.

The macro-control policies should continue next year, but they will need to be more targeted and flexible, he said.

He also called for expanding policies aimed at encouraging household consumption, improving investment structure and improving the business environment for small and micro enterprises.

Efforts should also focus on stabilizing and improving the structure for international trade and outbound investment, Lu said.

Under the current situation, China's economy must maintain an "appropriate and reasonable" growth rate, Lu said, adding that it has become difficult for the country to maintain a growth rate of 9 to 10 percent in the long run.

(Xinhua)

Technology to rein in pet-borne disease

By Zhao Hongyi

City officials plan to implant RFID chips in 2 million pet dogs as part of a tracing system that would prevent epidemics and ownership disputes, Zhao Genwu, director of the Municipal Bureau of Agriculture, said at a working session of the municipal congress.

Beijing is rapidly being overrun by dogs: it has 950,000 registered, and an estimated 1 million more that are being kept illegally.

Dog ownership has contributed to a wave of rabies. Last year, more than 30,000 people were bitten by dogs – nine died of rabies.

Six people died of rabies during the first half of 2011.

Rabies control requires vaccination rates of at least 70 percent. However, actual vaccination rates are too low. Lei Decai, director of the agricultural management committee of the municipal congress, attributed the low vaccination rate to owner negligence.

"We should prevent people from raising large dogs in the downtown area and walking their pets on the street outside the regulated hours," Lei said.

Feral cats have also contributed to the epidemic. Authorities organized 100 clinics in 10 districts to participate in trap-neuter-release programs. More than 40,000 cats have been sterilized since 2006, reducing yearly population growth by 70,000 cats.



RFID readers will be able to display the information about registered pets.

CFP Photo

Dead pet disposal is another major source of disease. Each year, more than 200,000 pets die in Beijing, causing a serious threat of epidemic disease.

The city planned to create nine disposal sites for dead pets years ago, but none have been constructed. Most dead pets are buried.

Last year, more than 37,100 tons of feral animals and pets died.

The demand for veterinary clinics has grown with pet ownership. There have also been a number of disputes over failed medical care.

It's urgent to regulate the practice of this industry,

including animal clinics, regional control of epidemics, registration of home pets, and the tracing system, director Zhao emphasized.

The bureau's collection centers for stray pets are designed to take in 4,000 animals; however, they have had to take in 6,904 strays for each of the last four years.

"The serious situation will get some attention in the next year's budget," said Li Yan, a professor of city management at Beijing City University.

"In the meantime, this should be a reminder that we need to obey the city's rules and regulations when we choose to raise pets."

Wangfujing installs nation's first gold vending machine

By Han Manman

A new gold vending machine gives consumers the opportunity to easily safeguard their cash amid rising prices and global financial insecurity.

The machine, located on Wangfujing's shopping street, accepts cash and bank cards and dispenses gold bars and coins at various weights. Withdrawals are capped at 2.5 kilograms, the equivalent of 1 million yuan in gold.

The yuan-to-gold exchange rate is updated

every 10 minutes.

Li Weizhou, operations manager of Gongmei Gold Trading, which installed the machine, said he expects the machine to be a big hit and hopes to have 2,000 similar gold vending machines installed in other cities within the next two years.

Gold vending machines already exist in the US, the United Arab Emirates, Germany, Spain, the UK and Italy.

"People in Asia have a unique taste for gold, especially

in China and India, and China doesn't have enough channels open for investment at the moment," said company president Zheng Ruixiang.

"Gold is often used as a hedge against inflation. These machines could prove popular among Chinese consumers looking for a convenient way to safeguard their cash amid rising prices," Zheng said.

He also said he thinks the conversion of more cash into solid assets may help ease pressure on commodity prices

across the nation.

A report by the World Gold Council in May shows China edged out India as the largest gold consumer in the first quarter of this year, buying 90.9 tons of the metal. Demand for jewelry in China soared 21 percent during the same period.

The machine accepts cash and bank cards and dispenses gold bars and coins.

Photo provided by Beijing Daily



Human error behind Shanghai subway crash

The operator of a train on Shanghai's subway Line 10 said Wednesday that human error played a role in Tuesday's crash that injured 189 people.

According to an initial investigation, a sudden loss of power caused the signal system to fail, forcing the trains to switch over to manual operation, Shanghai Shentong Metro Group Company said in a statement.

The train operators caused the crash by failing to follow the rules, the statement said, without elaborating.

Line 10 resumed full operation at 8 pm Wednesday after service was suspended at 12 stops for safety checks, the company said.

When service resumed, train speeds were limited to 45 kilometers per hour, it said.

The hospital is still treating 95 of the injured passengers, the city's health bureau said.

The crash occurred at 2:51 pm. The subway train stopped for about 15 minutes after the



Many passengers remain hospitalized.

Xinhua Photo

power failure, and then continued before stopping again for another 10 minutes before crashing into the other train, a young passenger in the train's first car said.

The signal system failed at 2:10 pm, after which the trains were directed by phone by subway staff, seriously reducing their speeds, the subway

operator said.

The signal system is a product of Casco Signal, a joint venture of China Railway Signal and Communication Corp and Alstom, which reportedly supplies signal systems to subways in Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin and Shenzhen.

Casco was blamed for a subway crash in Shanghai in 2009.

Casco also provided the centralized traffic control system for a railway in Zhejiang Province, where two bullet trains crashed on July 23, killing 40 people and injuring 177.

Jiang Jianhua, Casco's chief engineer, could not be reached for comment.

A staff member at Casco's headquarters declined to confirm with Xinhua if the company had launched an investigation into the accident.

Tuesday's crash was the result of the third system failure on Line 10 in the last two months.

Yu Guangyao, president of the Shanghai Shentong Metro Group, said Tuesday at the briefing that Casco promised Shentong it would fix the signal system after failing to instruct a train on Line 10 to run in the opposite direction on July 23.

Five days later, another Line 10 train stalled in the tunnel after a control device broke down.

(Xinhua)

CAAC investigates foreign pilots after landing foul-up

By Zhao Hongyi

Two pilots caused a landing crisis at Shanghai Pudong International Airport last month when both attempted to deceive the watchtower and jump the landing queue.

Their deception prompted the China Administration of Civil Aviation (CAAC) to begin background checks on the many foreign pilots hired to fly civilian aircraft throughout the country.

On August 23, Qatar Airways flight QR-888 sent a mayday call to the Pudong watchtower saying it was out of fuel and needed to make an emergency landing. Juneyao Airlines flight HO-1112, which was ahead of it in the queue, issued its own mayday call and refused to yield to the Qatar flight.

When the two flights landed, it was discovered that both had enough fuel left to remain airborne. However, the pilot of HO-1112 violated national aviation regulations by not giving priority to the first mayday call.

CAAC East China Bureau said that the South Korean captain of the Juneyao Airlines flight had intentionally attempted to prevent the Qatar pilot from landing ahead of him.

The bureau informed the International Civil Aviation Organization and forced Juneyao Airlines to dismiss the pilot. It also rescinded their license to hire foreign pilots.

The CAAC has empowered the East China Bureau to investigate 219 foreign pilots employed by Chinese airlines based in Shanghai. The investigation includes their professional training, capabilities and "morals."

Rapid growth in the civil aviation industry has resulted in more than a dozen new airlines opening since 2000, many of which acquired their pilots abroad.

More than 1,300 foreign pilots are employed by Chinese airlines. Most have been recruited from the US, Brazil, South Korea, Canada, Australia and Singapore, Li Jiaxiang, director general of CAAC said.

Most of the foreign pilots serve as captains on domestic flights, especially in East China, which receives one third of the nation's air traffic. The pilots are paid two to three times as much as their Chinese colleagues – the highest recorded income for a foreign pilot is \$250,000.

"We expect the foreign pilots to perform well and set an example for their colleagues," said Yang Lin, a senior engineer for civil aviation safety of CAAC.

In its regulations, the CAAC only allowed Chinese airlines to hire "qualified" foreign pilots.

"However, the process is so disjuncted that it is easy for foreign pilots and their intermediaries to create fake certificates to serve to their Chinese employers," Yang said.

Chinese pilots have been switching between airlines looking for higher pay, causing a number of labor disputes.

CAAC has amended its contracts for pilots, requiring that airlines hold pilot turnover below 1 percent each year.

Yang Lin said foreign pilots are not less responsible than their Chinese colleagues.

"The effective way to avoid a similar scandal is to make an example of such pilots, withdraw their licenses and cut wings. Their fall will be a lesson for their colleagues," she said.

Official's daughter criticized for ostentatious lifestyle

By Han Manman

The media's stalking of Guo Meimei, the female blogger who tarnished the name of the Chinese Red Cross with her very public and very lavish lifestyle, had done little to deter a new copycat.

Photos posted to the microblog of 21-year-old You Yixi are bringing unwanted scrutiny upon her father, a local government official in Jinping County, Guizhou Province.

In one photo, You poses with an orange Hermes handbag on her right arm and a large Louis Vuitton travel bag in her left hand. The two bags are estimated to be valued at 100,000 yuan.

She also tweeted proudly, "We bought a 17,000-yuan birthday present for my uncle and I chipped in 6,000 yuan." Other photos showed off her extensive wardrobe, which she jokingly said includes more clothes than she can remember to wear.

Her tweets were forwarded and eventually posted to Internet forums, where many questioned how a young university student could afford such luxuries.

Many accused her father of embezzlement.

Jinping County's income and quality of life place it below the official poverty line. Official reports from last year show that most households had an annual net income of 2,109 yuan. About 92 percent of the county's 200,000 people are farmers.

How a minor official in such



You Yixi's tweets run the risk of bringing an embezzlement investigation.

Photo from You Yixi's Sina microblog

a poor area can support You's lifestyle is certainly suspicious, netizens said.

You said the bags were cheap counterfeits that she bought online for 90 yuan each.

Her father said he has been quite strict about managing his daughter's spending.

"Even if she bought cheap copies, she is trying to present herself as rich," said Chen

Yajun, a Beijing resident.

Chen said the showy manner in which their children live has made many officials and celebrities the subject of scandalous rumors and government investigations.

According to a report released by the Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation last week, China is expected to overtake Japan as the world's largest luxury brand consumer this year.

The report attributed the shift to the ostentatious mindset of many Chinese, who spend beyond their means on luxury items.

A separate report released by the US-based non-profit World Luxury Association found that Chinese luxury consumers are typically much younger than their peers abroad.

The association's report said half of China's luxury consumers are between the ages of 18 and 34 – a group that makes up 37 and 28 percent of the luxury consumers in Japan and the UK.

"In China, it's widely thought that the possession of luxury goods is an accurate gauge of a person's social status," said Huang Wenjie, director of Guangdong Commodity Distribution Association.

Huang said the consumption of luxury products shows an abnormal trend, as most of the young consumers who are driving the trend are not rich enough to afford the products.



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Tapping at the Nobel Prize

Tu Youyou awarded 'America's Nobel' for anti-malarial drug

It is Nobel season. Although no one from the Chinese mainland has ever won the prize for science, pharmacologist Tu Youyou's winning of the Lasker Award, known as "America's Nobel," may signal an end to China's drought.



Tu Youyou developed a malaria drug that has saved millions of lives across the globe. CFP/Photo

About Tu

Tu, born in Ningbo, Zhejiang Province in 1930, is a pharmacologist at China Academy of Chinese Medical Sciences in Beijing. When she was still a high school student, she became interested in both traditional and modern medicine.

After studying at the School of Medicine of Peking University, Tu worked at the Academy of Chinese Medicine, now the China Academy of Chinese Medical Research in Beijing, in 1955.

In early 1969, Tu was appointed head of a government project that aimed at eradicating malaria, and it was then she began applying modern techniques with Chinese traditional medicine to find a drug therapy for malaria.

After detecting 380 extracts made from 2,000 candidate recipes, Tu and her team obtained a pure substance called Qinghaosu, later known as artemisinin.

The US-based Albert and Mary Lasker Foundation presented its \$250,000 (1.6 million yuan) Lasker Award to a Chinese scientist last week in New York, the Associated Press reported.

Pharmacologist Tu Youyou, 81, won this year's award for the discovery of artemisinin, a drug therapy for malaria that has saved millions of lives across the globe.

Tu, of the China Academy of Chinese Medical Sciences in Beijing, also became the first scientist on the Chinese mainland to win the Lasker Award, known as

"America's Nobel" because its winners tend to gain future recognition by the Nobel committee.

"Not often in the history of clinical medicine can we celebrate a discovery that has eased the pain and distress of hundreds of millions of people and saved the lives of countless numbers of people, particularly children, in over 100 countries," said Lucy Shapiro, a member of the award jury and professor at Stanford University.

Shapiro said Tu's work has provided the world with arguably the most important pharmaceutical intervention in the

last half century.

"The discovery of artemisinin is a gift to mankind from traditional Chinese medicine," Tu said while receiving the award.

But some Chinese netizens said the award reflected poorly on the country's top academic institutions, because Tu was still not a member of either the Chinese Academy of Sciences or the Chinese Academy of Engineering.

Tu's absence from the two top academies shows the drawbacks in the organizations' mechanisms for selecting members, said one netizen. (Agencies)

The third eye

Why don't more people from Chinese mainland win the Nobel Prize?

By Huang Daohen

Chen Ning Yang, the first Chinese Nobel Prize winner in 1957 for his work on subatomic particles, said the reason no Chinese national has won the Nobel Prize in science, economics or literature has to do with culture.

"The Chinese traditional doctrine of the golden mean is not the best for modern scientific development," Yang was quoted by *Chengdu Daily* as saying on a visit to a school in Sichuan Province last year.

Yang said under the current environment, which stresses standardization, there isn't room for maverick scientific talents.

"Inquisitive thinkers are considered deviants," he said. "And that's why the Geometric Law of Euclid wasn't found in China."

Yang also said China is too obsessed with the Nobel, as officials from all levels throw money at researchers in pursuit of the prize, rather than reforming the education system.

Chen Yong, chemistry professor at the University of Science and Technology Beijing, agreed. "Like winning Olympics gold, the nation has a Nobel fixation," he said.

Plagiarism, fueled by the sense of urgency, has flourished across the country.

But winning a Nobel Prize is a long-term effort, as the accumulation and creation of knowledge often spans multiple generations, Chen said.

Research on Nobel laureates show that winners are usually connected to three generations of knowledge-seekers. "The social, educational and research

environment including family education all play important roles in this process," Chen said.

But in China, statistics show that fewer than 40 percent of academicians were born into professional families, and only about 10 percent of their children are engaged in high-level scientific research, as more choose to enter the financial field.

However, the government hasn't lost its faith. In 2007, it invested 25 billion yuan in 150 long-term science projects and carried out reforms for the education system. It has also wooed Nobel laureates, inviting them to visit local universities and give lectures.

"If it continues on this path, China will surely be capable of winning a Nobel Prize," Chen said.

Brief

Newest panda census shows growth

(AFP) – The giant panda breeding center in Chengdu, Sichuan Province started with just six pandas in 1987 and now has more than 100.

The center looks after red pandas and other endangered Chinese animals as well.

Meanwhile, China has launched its once-a-decade panda census, trying to determine how many of the endangered animals live in the wild, amid efforts to boost numbers.

The census is also expected to ascertain pandas' living conditions, ages and any changes in their habitat.

The census is the fourth since the 1970s.

The count a decade ago found 1,596 pandas were left in the wild in China, with 1,206 of them living in Sichuan.

Wild pandas are threatened by a loss of habitat and poaching, and because they are notoriously poor breeders.

Females in the wild normally have a cub once every two or three years.

Fertility rates of captive giant pandas – of which there are more than 300 in China – are even lower.

Police to use more social media

(AFP) – The country has ordered police nationwide to make more use of social networking sites to ensure greater openness and "dispel misunderstandings," Xinhua reported said Tuesday.

Huang Ming, vice-minister of public security, delivered the message at a conference on Monday aimed at helping law enforcement officials to use the country's hugely popular microblogs – sites similar to Twitter – the report said.

"Internet users are one of the major groups of our society and they are not satisfied," Huang posted on the Beijing Public Security Bureau microblog.

"Public security microblogging should gradually cross the country to each province and city and form the backbone of public security."

Huang said police had opened more than 4,000 accounts nationwide and nearly 5,000 officers were using microblogs.

Yao Ming to go 'back to school'

(AFP) – Yao Ming is returning to school this autumn, three months after retiring from the game that made him a global star, Xinhua News Agency reported, citing his agent.

The former Houston Rockets player will attend Shanghai's Jiaotong University, one of China's most prestigious institutions, but has not yet decided what he will study, his agent Zhang Mingji said.

But fellow students won't be sitting next to the towering Yao. The university will assign him special teachers for one-on-one sessions because he was worried his appearance in class would affect other students, Xinhua reported late Monday.

"Yao has always been learning since retirement," Zhang said. "He has never stopped learning."

Jiaotong, considered one of China's top universities, is renowned for its science and engineering departments.

Yao, whose success on the court made him a hero to hundreds of millions of basketball-mad Chinese, announced his retirement in July.

He enrolled at Jiaotong for his undergraduate degree shortly before heading to the US to play in the NBA, but was too busy to do the coursework, state media has previously reported.

Second 'subprime crisis' looms

Saddled with debt, manufacturers bail on failing businesses

By Huang Daohen

Suffering from bad business and cripplingly large loans, many southeastern manufacturers have opted to get the hell out of Dodge.

In the past two weeks, as many as 20 businessmen abandoned their factories in the booming southeast, leaving workers jobless and their underground investors with hundred of millions of yuan in unpaid debt.

The shock waves their actions have sent through the country's lending market are being likened to a second "subprime crisis."



Thousands of protestors gather at Xintai's factory to demand their pay.

CFP Photo

Bosses flee

Over the weekend, thousands of protestors took to the streets of Wenzhou, Zhejiang Province, shutting down the city's traffic. Among them were the employees and creditors of Zhejiang Xintai Group, a bankrupt eyeglass manufacturer with more than 3,000 employees.

They marched and gathered at Xintai's factory as word spread that on September 12 the company's president, Hu Fuling, fled Wenzhou for the US to escape his debt of 2 billion yuan.

Local media said police were called out to prevent looting, but crowds still encircled the company on Monday.

Xintai is one of the nation's largest eyeglasses manufacturers. Last year, the company sold more than 270 million yuan worth of spectacles.

But Hu is "penniless."

The *Wenzhou Evening News* reported that Hu never paid his employees for their August and September labor, another 10 million yuan.

A local insider surnamed Chen told the newspaper that about 1.2 billion yuan of Hu's debt came from underground lenders.

Since Xintai is the biggest eyeglass vendor, Hu's flight triggered a panic among local lenders, many of whom now fear they will not be repaid.

Chen said the company's collapse was due to its rapid expansion in preparation for an IPO. It bought equipment and built new factories, but failed to become publicly traded.

Hu was not the first boss to run away.

In Wenzhou, the bosses of

"When business owners like Hu run away, they leave thousands of workers jobless and hundreds of millions of yuan unpaid."

shoemaker Xinnaobao and button-maker Ouba disappeared during the past two weeks. Xu Huocong, a businessman in Fujian Province, was reportedly on the run with a debt of 300 million yuan owed to the underground.

As of press time, Wenzhou authorities said 20 major businessmen had fled the city. Each borrowed hundreds of millions of yuan on the black market.

Black market banks

Problems related to black market lending are nothing new.

Jin Jijun, a Wenzhou entrepreneur in his 40s, is a wine trader. He used to be a real estate investor with a portfolio that also included art and stocks. But his investments were only possible because he drew from the black market.

"That is how business operates in Wenzhou," Jin said.

Underground lending began in the 1980s, when the private economy first opened up. At that time, there was limited funding available for small- and medium-sized enterprises in the coastal cities.

"Underground capital was necessary to bootstrap new businesses," Jin said. Such informal lending continued to support growth through the 1990s and 2000s.

But the trend has come back with a vengeance since the government tightened its monetary

policy to fight inflation. Many state-owned banks have a policy of denying all loans to private companies and individual investors.

That forced aspiring businessmen to draw on the black market, where capital comes at a high interest rate, Jin said.

Bloomberg News suggested that annual lending from the underground could involve 2 trillion yuan. In some coastal cities like Wenzhou, more than 70 percent of the population draws on illegal sources.

A subprime crisis?

The Wenzhou government said it set up a special team to track down bosses who run out on their underground loans. However, few can be caught before they escape the city.

On September 13, local police in Wenzhou arrested Zheng Zhuju, a businesswoman who attempted to walk out from 280 million yuan in debt, most owed to private lenders and banks.

Zheng, 49, is an owner of a local home appliance chain store, selling various products from companies such as Sharp, Siemens, Sony, Samsung, LG and domestic brands like Hisense, Midea and Haier.

Police said in recent years, Zheng paid little attention to the home appliance business, but was more involved in the real estate

and stock market. While the new investments failed, Zheng turned to the underground and conducted illegal lending and fundraising.

On the day she was arrested, Zheng was carrying tens of millions of yuan in cash, according to the city police.

But Zheng's arrest did little to ease local panic.

Jin described the investment climate as a gray cloud hanging over Wenzhou.

"It's terrible. When business owners like Hu run away, they leave thousands of workers jobless and hundreds of millions of yuan unpaid," he said.

Steven Kang, a senior analyst at Accenture in Beijing, said that is one of the consequences of using black market banks.

Kang said that relying on the underground has two consequences: for businessmen short on money, it means they will pay a much higher interest rate; for lenders, they have no legal recourse to punish bad clients.

"So when business fails, most choose to walk away," Kang said.

But the lending crisis is only being driven deeper under the surface as demand for capital grows. In one closed-door meeting, the head of the national Banking Regulatory Commission, Liu Mingkang, said 3 trillion yuan of the deposits made to state banks may have flowed in from the underground.

That is equivalent to the net capital of the nation's five largest banks.

"If these loans continue to go unpaid, it will cause severe problems in the nation's capital market and lead to serious social instability," Yang said.



Li Na Photo by Zuma Cui

Crown to expand presence in China with Li Na

By Huang Daohen

Entering the China market can be a daunting task for any foreign brand. While foreign brands and technology alone were enough to attract Chinese consumers a decade ago, today it takes more than a Chinese spokesperson to succeed.

That may be why Crown Melbourne, Australia's leading integrated entertainment resort, announced last week that it signed a two-year sponsorship agreement with French Open champion Li Na.

At 29 years old, tennis sensation Li became the first Chinese player to reach the Australian Open final before winning a singles Grand Slam at this year's French Open.

However, Li failed early on at Wimbledon and the US Open.

At last Friday's sponsorship event, Li said her poor performance was due to a lack of toughness.

"Women tennis players face ups and downs because women don't have the mentality of men, who have a strong will to win," she said. "Instead, we are easily satisfied after winning a championship and tend to want time off for self-adjustment."

Li said the sudden fame has not affected her. "I don't think there is any change, and I'm still a tennis player," she said.

"Maybe people around look at me in a different way and like to put the crown on me, but as a tennis player, all I need to do is to give my best performance on the court," she said.

Crown hopes Li's global fan base, especially her massive appeal in China, will provide the company with significant exposure in Asia, said Greg Hawkins, Crown's deputy chief executive officer.

Li is an integral part of Crown's global marketing strategy as it attempts to attract international visitors, Hawkins said.

Currently, Crown owns and operates Crown Melbourne and the Burswood Entertainment Complex in Perth. Both resorts are major destinations for Chinese tourists.

Hawkins said Crown Melbourne attracts as many as 18 million visitors from home and abroad each year.

\$11m painting could be a fake

By Zhao Hongyi

Xu Beihong, one of the most famous Chinese painters of the early half of last century, has seen a dramatic financial windfall for both his ink and wash and oil paintings in recent years.

In June 2010, his oil painting "Nude Jiang Beiwei" was auctioned off for 72.8 million yuan (\$11.4 million) at the spring session of Jiuge Auction International in Beijing.

But a group of old graduates from the Central Academy of Fine Arts (CAFA) in the 1980s jointly claimed this week that the auctioned piece was in fact created by one of them, not Xu, in 1983.

They appealed for the seller and auction house to make all details on paintings clear in the future.

The joint appeal letter appeared in Nanfang Weekend, a paper based in Guangzhou.

Xu spent years studying oil painting in Paris in the early 1920s. When he returned to China, he began painting horses using Chinese ink – a subject and medium that later became his signature. The painter also taught many artists during this time.

The CAFA graduates claim they had an oil painting class in May 1983 in which they were invited to paint a model from Jiangsu Province who was called "L."

"It was in a big classroom in the northwest corner of the famous U-type building of the old CAFA," the letter says. "It took us three weeks to finish the work."

They admitted it's possible Xu could have also painted the model. "But the hairstyle of the girl was from the 1980s. It is impossible that Master Xu painted her with the same clothing, gesture, figure, hairstyle and expression," the students wrote.

Jiuge Auction said it obtained written confirmation from Xu Boyang, son of Xu Beihong, that said, "The work is a true piece from my father and has been kept by my mother."

"It's common in the auction market for people to pass off fake works that they claim to be created by famous artists," said Gong Jisui, professor of CAFA's market management of art.

In 2008, a purchaser auctioned an ink painting from Wu Guanzhong called "Pool." Afterwards, the purchaser approached the painter for confirmation but the painter said the work was fake.

Han Meilin, another ink painter and designer of the Beijing Olympic mascots, said that he has found many fake works under his name that have been auctioned throughout the country.

"In some cases, I had to paint works to help the purchasers because I felt very sorry for them," Han said.

In another incident, a failed real estate developer employed several workers to make jinlouyuyi – jade pieces covered by gold threads – and asked a group of appraisers to take a look. The appraisers said the jinlouyuyi were worth 2.4 billion yuan.



Xu Boyang holds the allegedly fake painting that he declared was done by his father.



The allegedly fake painting of Xu Beihong



A group of former art students say the auctioned painting was part of a series of nude women they painted 20 years ago. Photos provided by Beijing Youth Daily

Comment

Seller must be punished

In this case, the son of Xu Beihong should be investigated and pay compensation. How can you be sure the work was made by your father? Did you see him paint it yourself?

The auctioneer and purchaser should also take responsibility. Ask the seller why he was sure. It only takes a few questions.

– Zhuang Sheng, commentator, Xinhua News Agency

Objects must be authentic

Auctioneers make their judgments on objects based on certificates offered by the sellers. If an object is discovered to be fake, sellers must take most of the responsibility.

– Zheng Xinyao, deputy secretary, China Association of Auctioneers

Auctioneers must be qualified

Chinese auction law states auctioneers and sellers don't need to take any

responsibility if they claim beforehand that they don't guarantee the authenticity of objects.

Our government should regulate the auction market, license qualified auction houses and guarantee quality. Otherwise, fake works and cheats will abound.

– Zhang Ning, vice chairman, Antique Judgment Committee, Chinese Association of Antiques

Blind investment fever must be curbed

Blind investment in art and antiques must be stopped. We should crack down on sellers, auction houses and purchasers alike.

In these cases, criminal law, civil responsibility and monetary penalties should all be used.

– Qiu Baochang, head lawyer of China Consumer's Association

Apple under fire for Peking University outlet

By Huang Daohen

Apple has been at the center of criticism after opening a store in one of China's most prestigious universities.

The 40-square-meter store, still under decoration, is on the third floor of the Peking University library, with glass walls separating it from the study area. It opened its doors to faculty members on September 15 and sparked an unexpectedly heated debate about commercial activities on campus.

Some students expressed annoyance. "Business operations like this will affect the atmosphere of study," said a student on the school's forum. Others, though, said the move is a means of making money, and welcomed Apple's products.

Apple did not respond on the subject, but Liangyu Science and Technology Development, a Shanghai-based company that runs the store, said products currently aren't being sold, but they are available for students and faculty to try.

Liangyu told local media that it has similar stores in several Shanghai universities, but none have aroused such public concern because they are in campus shopping areas.

A member at Peking University's curator's office refused to comment on Tuesday. The university told *Beijing Times* that it may close the store if students strongly oppose it.

Comment

Location matters

I wonder why the company chose to open the store in the library. If it were somewhere else on campus, it definitely wouldn't have caused such public outcry. But taking out a study area? No way. Can you imagine the scene whenever a new Apple product launches, thousands of students lining up in the library for days before the release date?

This would most likely not be welcomed in Australia either.

– David Fabiano, Australian project director

Not Apple's fault

I don't think it's all Apple's fault. The university must have agreed to it and been paid a lot of money.

As to whether top-ranking schools like Peking University should take a stand on commercialism, I think there's a place for commerce in the education system, be it at the university or high school level.

However, schools shouldn't put all their weight behind one specific company.

– Liu Feng, accountant

Cultural issue

Having lived in China for several years, I think there are also cultural factors behind the fuss.

The Chinese take education somewhat more seriously than people in the US do. For thousands of years, Chinese people advanced [in life] via government examinations, which were sometimes supervised by the emperor himself. As a result, campuses and places of learning – like the library – seem almost sacred.

– Paul Winter, American teacher

Books come first

I'm a casual fan of Apple products, but I think it's a poorly thought-out plan to open a store in the library of Peking University. A library, above all other buildings on campus, is a sacred place. If I were forced to choose between the iPad and books, the Apple gadget would lose every time.

– Alice Wei, college student

French lovers bike continents to collect dreams

By Han Manman

Anne Salaun and Benjamin Stoll recently finished a half-year journey from France to Beijing on a tandem bicycle. Their trek, part of a "bike to school" project, will be made into a documentary.

For the young couple, the odyssey also marked a test of love.



The customized tandem bike drew lots of attention from passersby.



A weird bike

On the courtyard of a local hotel, a dirty and shabby tandem bike captures passersby's attention. Many ask, "What is that weird thing?"

A young woman walks out with a pair of crutches. She is Anne Salaun, 25, one of the bike's owners. She is then joined by Benjamin Stoll, 27, the other owner – and Salaun's fiancé.

The couple both graduated from the Reims Management School in France earlier this year. As majors in intercultural management, the two decided to ride a tandem bike from Reims to China six months ago as part of a project to bring people together.

After crossing 10 countries, including Germany, Austria, Ukraine and Russia, they finally arrived at their final stop – Beijing – last week.

Salaun said she was excited to reach her destination, even though she had to take a train from Xi'an to Beijing.

"I fell over on a rainy day when I was in Xi'an. The doctor told me not to move my feet for some weeks," she said. "But we had a schedule for getting into Beijing, and to meet that schedule, we had to take a train. But anyway, we've arrived."

The bike, on which Stoll lies down in the front and Salaun sits in the back, was specially made by a Netherlands designer who learned of the couple's journey, which would include harsh terrain



The French couple made friends on their journey.

Photos provided by Benjamin Stoll

such as deserts and mountains.

"Lots of people ride bikes from continent to continent, but we were the first to ride a [tandem bike]," Salaun said.

Salaun said the bicycle served as a great icebreaker with other people. She said young people were often shy at first, "but when they see this weird bike, they're equipped with plenty of questions and are really curious and want to try it," she said.

Dream collectors

The project required Salaun and Stoll to interview young people from different countries about their dreams and their vision of the future.

Stoll said they normally asked four questions: what job do you want? Do you have dreams? Are you confident about your future? How do you see your country in 10 or 15 years?

"From their questions, you can see how they see themselves and their society," Stoll said.

Stoll said they were very impressed with young Chinese

people's confidence in themselves and their country.

"Many told us that they believe in 10 to 15 years, China will be a really powerful country," Stoll said, adding that Chinese youth are also positive about their future and believe earning money is related to hard work.

Stoll said they are happy to see that most of the youth they interviewed on the road have dreams. But they found that dreams vary widely.

He said if an interviewee's family is in a good situation, the young people will talk about traveling or entering a good profession, but rarely about money.

But those who come from families with financial problems will say their dream is to make lots of money.

"Many told us they don't know what kind of job they want to do and the exact dream they have, but they want to have money," Stoll said.

Salaun said lots of young people also asked about the bike's price, where it could be bought

Anne Salaun and Benjamin Stoll rode from France to Beijing, asking young people about their dreams.

and where she and Stoll sleep every night.

"But we noticed that depending on the social background of these students, the questions don't come in the same order," she said, adding that the first question asked by students from stable families is more about food supply, camping and how to deal with different situations, but those from poor families ask about bike price first.

"The situation is the same in all countries, even in France," she said.

A test of love

For Stoll and Salaun, the journey was also a test of love.

The two met in the first week in graduate school, and it was "love at first sight," Salaun said.

They have been together ever since.

They've done lots of things together, but many of their friends and family members objected to their plan to bike across Europe and Asia.

"They asked us to not go. It's a crazy risk, and they said we would encounter many unexpected things on the road, which may lead us to break up," Stoll said.

"But when you want to be with someone in your life, you have to pass some tests. Because it's easy to live with someone in good situations, but hard in bad conditions," Stoll said. "For us, it's important to have such an experience before our wedding because it's a real life test."

Stoll said even before departing, they had crazy moments. They were exhausted and under high pressure to schedule the trip, to find money and build a support team, all the while preparing for graduation.

"After this, we really know each other in good times and bad," Salaun said. She thinks their relationship is stronger for the hardships they went through. The two plan to get married next year.

Showing off her engagement ring, Salaun said Stoll proposed to her before the journey, but she thought it was for the sake of appearances. Salaun had mentioned that it might be safer for other people to see that the two were engaged.

"So when I got the ring box, my brain reminded that it was just for show," Salaun said, adding that when Stoll asked her when she wanted to wear it, she answered "maybe the day before leaving" without any emotion on her face.

"But Stoll said 'maybe it's a little bit more than just travel,'" Salaun said. "I was so excited and nearly fainted after hearing the words."

Salaun and Stoll are planning to return to France in two weeks.

They will probably go by train, where they will have 12 days to talk to as many different people as possible about their experience. She said if the two took a plane, they could only talk to those closest to them, and for only 12 hours.

Czech embassy invites photographer for 798 exhibition

By Wei Xi

Last Saturday afternoon, Vaclav Jirasek, a famous Czech photographer, was invited by the Czech embassy to present an exhibition of his work at 798 Art District.

This exhibition was part of Embassyart, a three-year cultural communication and exchange project organized by the Czech embassy starting last year.

Libor Secka, the Czech ambassador to China, said the project aims to introduce Czech culture to Beijing and provide an avenue for exchange between Czech and

Chinese artists. Exhibitions always include invitations to artists from both countries.

"For example, for this photo exhibition, we invited a Chinese band to give a performance in the gallery," said Davis Hrdousek, a Czech embassy secretary. "We hope to connect artists from both sides."

Working with large cameras and making only contact prints, Jirasek likes to make staged portraits that use symbols to discuss the importance of an individual's spiritual nature.

"I like Gothic and simple things,

which have hidden stories behind them," he said.

About 30 photos were displayed. One of the major themes was "Industria," documenting the post-industrial environment in the Czech Republic. Photos consisted of industrial architecture, portraits of workers and topography of "industrial design."

Jirasek grew up in an industrial sector. He often shared the same bus as local factory workers, which is how he grew deeply interested in their work. He took a series of photos on this subject

between 1994 and 1996.

Ten years later, wondering about the fate of the workers of closed-down factories (many heavy industrial factories in the Czech Republic were shut down during the early 1990s), Jirasek spent a year photographing them starting in 2004.

"Before I came to Beijing, I got to know the history of 798 Art District. It used to be a factory, like the ones I shot in the Czech Republic, so I think it's a good place to exhibit these photos," Jirasek said.

Other themes are "Infection" and "Upsych."

Infection depicts a joint project between a writer and his protagonist; Upsych shows a group of Czech artists and their studio in a former Renaissance chateau.

"Jirasek is big in Europe," Hrdousek said. "He is different from other photographers because he used to learn painting, and most of his photographs look very much like paintings."

Hrdousek said the photo exhibition will be open until October 16. In December, paintings by Tomas Cisarovsky, a Czech artist, will be displayed in 798.

US ambassador promotes green transportation



By Han Manman

US ambassador Gary Locke and his wife Mona Lee visited Jiangtan Park in Wuhan, Hubei Province last week to take part in a green carbon cycling fitness activity to promote urban green initiatives.

The activity was part of the first-ever "Wuhan American Week." Held from September 22 to 28, the week was jointly sponsored by the US embassy in Beijing, the Hubei Provincial Government and Wuhan Municipal Government. Various activities held during the week include trade promotion, a photo exhibit to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the establishment of the old US consulate in Hankou, a Norman Rockwell art exhibit at the Wuhan Art Museum and jazz concert.

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American family promotes sustainable tourism in Yunnan



The Linden Centre occupies the space of a renovated national relic.

Photos provided by Brian Linden

By Annie Wei

Two weeks ago, The Hutong, a Beijing-based cultural center, hosted a free lecture by Brian Linden, co-founder of the Linden Centre in Yunnan Province. Linden shared his family's experiences in Yunnan Province and talked about why his center has been a success.

From US to Yunnan

Brian Linden and his family have a long history with China. In the early 1980s, Linden and his wife, Jeanee, began to travel, study and work throughout Asia. When they returned to the US, they opened an Asian gallery.

"Jeanee and I met in Nanjing in 1987, and our children have been involved in our US-based Asian galleries since their births," Linden said.

For two decades, the family lived between two cultures, and the dream was always to bridge these two. They wanted to build a platform in which "we could more deeply explore, via cultural programs, China's timeless traditions," Linden said.

The family searched throughout China for two years before deciding on a village called Xizhou, located 20 kilometers from Dali, which had a perfect balance of traditional culture and access to tourist sites. In 2004, intrigued by the area's architecture and historic landmarks, the family founded the Linden Centre.

The center was renovated out of the Yangjiayuan, a set of ethnic Bai buildings with traditional styles of construction featuring wood and stones.

The Lindens kept the buildings' basic features while restoring it from the inside. One of the buildings is now a spacious boutique hotel with 14 guest rooms.

The hard process of restoration

Unlike building a new house, the renovation of Yangjiayuan was far more complicated because it was a set of pre-revolutionary buildings classified as a Type A national relic.

Yunnan Province attracts millions of tourists for its unique scenery and multiple ethnic groups. Occasionally, those tourists decide to become permanent residents. So it was for the Lindens, an American family that took a historic complex in Xizhou in southwest Yunnan and transformed it into a cultural center and boutique hotel where visitors can deepen their understanding of the area's culture.



The Centre's courtyard



Public room

According to the Linden Centre's website, it took the family two years of negotiating with both the local government and culture bureau to gain access to the buildings, then they had to convince numerous officials that they would carefully restore the structures to their pre-revolutionary grandeur.

"We did not view financial gain as the main reason for developing the center," Linden said. "Our goals were more lofty and perhaps idealistic. We wanted to continue to build a forum for cultural exchange."

Linden said he believed his family's passion for exchange was evident to the government and to locals, and that was why they were given access to this historic complex.

The Lindens promised to inject life into the structures while not altering their original elegance.

"Our agreement with the cultural bureaus made historical accuracy more important," Linden said. "We have worked hard to incorporate modern amenities while not destroying the architectural legacy of the complex."

Respecting locals was key to success. Throughout the negotiation process, Linden said he respected the cultural bureau's genuine concern over preservation.

"In reality, they were always consistent with the true spirit of our project. I believe that the cultural bureau sensed our concerns for preservation, and we were able to strike the balance between preservation and comfort that has made the center so successful," he said.

Goal of sustainability

Because of the nature of this project—heritage and community outreach—the Linden Centre was built using local workers. It maintains sustainability by hiring local staff.

The center also purchases almost everything from the local community. Staffers teach villagers English and volunteer at

local kindergartens. The center tries to develop more organic farming options, including for use by the hotel.

"Sustainability in this sense means being a part of the community while not altering it too greatly," Linden said. "You won't see T-shirt and souvenir shops outside our complex."

The government has been very supportive and is aware of Xizhou's living culture, Linden said. Officials believe the center can be a new paradigm for development in China's rural areas.

Linden said many travelers are surprised to find that the hotel is different from many others in two key respects: there are no TVs in the rooms, and absolutely no smoking is allowed.

"We purposely didn't place televisions in the rooms to promote interaction, and we don't allow smoking in our complex because of the Cultural Bureau's requirements to protect this national relic. The goal is to encourage guests to interact with our family, our knowledgeable staff and with the villagers," Linden said.

At night, the front yard becomes loud and boisterous as visitors come out to interact.

Experiencing more

After finishing restoration in 2008, The Linden Centre won several awards, including *Travel and Leisure's* Global Vision Award in 2010 and *Voyager Magazine's* China Sustainable Tourism Award for 2010-2011.

The center is praised for having in-depth programs for visitors to learn about the area in the form of two- or three-week workshops.

The Lindens said they would like to work with other communities to replicate their model of sustainability in the coming year.

The center always welcomes volunteers and encourages anyone interested in learning more to visit linden-centre.com.

A few things to know for home-stays with local families

By Wei Xi

Jay Kohl, an American student, posted an online ad two weeks ago searching for a Chinese family to stay with so that he can learn the language and culture.

"I am a clean, non-smoking, and considerate American man looking for a homestay in the Wudaokou area to improve my Chinese language skills," he wrote. "I am willing to offer help with English tutoring and even can assist you with applying to foreign universities."

He still hasn't found a suitable home.

"Most of the families that contacted me seem to be interested in doing business instead of cultural exchange," he said. "I think I might have to rent an apartment in the end."

Kohl isn't the only expat finding it difficult to find a home stay in Beijing. Michael Benson, who wants to come to Beijing in September, has also faced obstacles.

"I've looked online and found many services but they all seem outdated and now defunct; most haven't been updated in many years," he said.

Why is finding a home stay family so difficult? *Beijing Today* consulted a Chinese teacher, Jessie Xi, who has been teaching foreign



Home-stay helps improve one's understanding of local culture.

CFP Photo

students at the University of International Business and Economics for more than six years.

Xi has accepted many home stays, and from her own experience and what she's been told, she said there were four major problems visitors may encounter when applying for home stays.

Problem 1: Having too high expectation for language improvement.

Suggestion: Because both

expats and locals have their own work to do during the day, there aren't that many opportunities for communication. Foreigners should not think that just because they live with a Chinese family, their language skills will improve by leaps and bounds.

Problem 2: Regarding oneself as a guest instead of a family member.

Suggestion from Xi: Expats need to be active in integrating

themselves into the family. They should view themselves as a family member rather than a guest who needs to be cared for. For example, if a visitor has a room of his or her own, he or she should keep it clean. Also, spending time with the family during get-togethers is a useful way to improve relationships.

Problem 3: Not making clear what a family's rules or boundaries are beforehand.

Suggestion from Xi: Many Chinese families don't foresee the cultural differences that may cause problems for visitors. Home-stay applicants and hosts need to establish ground rules at the beginning, such as privacy expectations, curfews and inviting other guests.

Problem 4: Overly high demands for the living environment.

Suggestion from Xi: Most foreigners study or work near posh areas and hope they can live nearby. They often expect private rooms with private bathrooms. But apartments aren't always very large, even in areas like the central business district, so expats need to lower their standards.

Xi also said that most Chinese families who are willing to accept expats usually are interested in learning from their visitor as well.

"They usually hope the expat can help with their kid's English studies or with their own language skills," she said. "Otherwise, very few families would be willing to have a stranger stay at their home."

Xi said she is taking home-stay applications, and also recommended anyone interested contact jessiehomestay@126.com or maoyoyo73@sina.com.

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Italian designer Hara Roglietti's Dragon People

Yang Zhen first discovered the European dragon while studying in Bonn, Germany. One day, she heard the legend of a dragon on the mountain near her rented house and she decided to climb it at night. Local residents she met on the way persuaded her not to pursue her adventure at night.

They scared me with their terrible description. From when I was a child, I had heard of the dragon. I had read about the dragon. Yang said Tuesday at the Chinese Dragon Forum. "I told them what they considered to be ferocious was something I saw as a totem."

Dragons have been an important theme in Chinese architecture, costume, literature and spiritual belief. Their central importance is something that is often difficult for people from other cultures to appreciate. A frequent design motif. Every year of the dragon, each country and region issues new stamps to celebrate.

Hong Kong designer Kan Tai-keung, a judge in the competition, was the first designer of dragon stamps. In 1976, he only drew the dragon's head and one claw.

Aside from his design work, Kan is an avid art collector. Many of his pieces he brought to the forum were acquired from flea markets. He even collected dragon accessories and toys.

"The dragon is a universal motif in Chinese design. Many of the items I bought were produced by folk craftsmen for common use," he said.

But few young designers and artists incorporate the dragon into their works.

"Most of my generation knows little about the dragon and the dragon is not a popular element in their work," said Wu Yang, an illustrator born in the 1980s.

Her latest published album combines traditional



Yi Zhaoou's A Dragon Called 90



painting techniques with digital illustration. The series includes her interpretations of how the dragon and his nine sons appear.

According to legend, one of the dragon's sons is reckless and adventurous: his image is used to decorate the eaves of palaces. The second son is seen on sword and knife hilts. The third likes to gaze into the distance and is used on rooftops. The fourth is used on the handle of a sword. The fifth appears and archways. The fifth is carved on bells. The sixth appears as the base of stone tablets. The seventh loves music, and his image is carved onto the bridge of stringed instruments. The eighth is the legs of incense burners. The ninth and final son is carved on doors.

Dutch designer Michael Lugmayr calls Wu a young dragon expert. "It is not only because Wu paints so many different dragons, but also because she knows the cultural content behind each."

"When people ask me what is dragon, it's hard to give a good answer. I could just show you a picture and say, 'This is a dragon, but that's too simple,'" Wu said. "I need a verse from the Diamond Sutra that says, 'The world is not what we see, but the names we give it.'"

In China, one of the symbols represents heaven dividing life into two halves. The dragon represents the male and the phoenix represents the female. The dragon is also used as a metaphor to describe each stage. The fifth stage is called "lying in the sky," and it represents the emperor, the highest power in feudal society.

"In ancient times, we called the emperor the Son of Heaven. We used cardinal numbers to represent yang, which is associated with the sky and masculinity. Nine is the largest single cardinal number, so we called emperor the 'Nine-five Son of Heaven'."

"That philosophy of 'Nine and Five' is also adopted in architecture. Tiananmen, for example, has five doors and nine divisions in the tower. "Every Chinese person knows of



Wu Yang combines traditional painting and digital illustration.



Y. C. Pang's Olympic Series

Designing the dragon

Competition walks the line between cultures

By He Jianwei

The dragon could represent the greatest difference between Asian and European cultures.

As one of the earliest and most highly imaginative creations of Chinese culture, the dragon has served as the spiritual guide of the Chinese for thousands of years.

But in European traditions, the dragon is a huge, winged, fire-breathing reptile most often associated with evil.

To promote understanding of such differences, PoloArts is organizing an international design competition for works based on the Chinese dragon. Starting Wednesday, nine judges from eight countries and regions will evaluate more than 3,000 submissions by young designers from 30 countries.

Tiananmen, but few realize what is implied in its design. It was a style reserved for imperial architecture," she said. Dragons are also divided according to their numbers of claws.

"Dragons with five claws only appear on the items used by the emperor, such as on his costumes and palace roofs. If you know the history of the Tang Dynasty (618-907), you will find that the dragon in Japan have only three claws and a few have four," she said.

Lugmayr said he admired the depth of dragon culture, but he wondered if the concept could be rendered in abstract form, such as by drawing nine dots on a paper and highlighting five of them.

"That would absolutely not be a dragon," Wu said. "In ancient times, the image of the dragon could be represented by a red line. It was a red line that looks like a dragon flying, but without any legs."

It is still a mystery why the image of the dragon became more and more concrete and detailed from Han Dynasty (206 BC-220 AD) to Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), but Wu said it merely followed artistic trends that were then dominant in Asia.

The competition of Tibetan Tongba also went from abstract to concrete. People drew up regulations for each character's position and color," she said.

The competition is only accepting works based on the Chinese dragon. Works that reflect the European concept of a dragon will be rejected.

"Next year is the year of the dragon. We hope the competition can promote dragon culture and give young designers a chance to express their understanding of the Chinese dragon," said Wang Xiang, director of PoloArts.

Winners will be announced in early 2012, and the 100 finalists will have their work exhibited at Capital Museum.



Ma Tianlin's Playing with Dragon
Photos provided by PoloArts

"Next year is the year of the dragon. We hope the competition can promote dragon culture and give young designers a new look at the Chinese dragon."

Dutch designer Michael Lugmayr



Geographical biography marks anniversary of writer's death

By He Jianwei

The publication of *Sanmao: 1943-1991* (241pp, Writers' Press, 39.8 yuan), the only biography authorized by the late Taiwanese writer's family, in January began a flood of books that would commemorate her death.

Six months later, biographer Shi Yonggang released a follow-up book, *Sanmao Taipei Map*, which traces the writer's 48 years through the 20 places she lived, studied, wrote and died.

The book includes places such as 36 Hejiang Jie, the first place her family lived after they moved to Taipei where she was a neighbor to current literary master Bai Xian-yong. When she reached school age, Sanmao attended Taipei First Girls' High School, the cradle of many celebrities.

Sanmao was the pseudonym of Chen Ping, who was born in 1943 in Chongqing and moved to Taiwan with her family in 1948. In the 1970s, she became a popular author with millions of fans in Taiwan, Hong Kong and the mainland.

Her works and personality have influenced several generations of the Chinese community. She described exotic travels with humor and wit.

Her first published work was a fictional autobiography, *The Stories of the Sahara*, which described a trip to the Sahara desert in 1974 with her Spanish husband. She not only described her adventure into a different culture, but also made readers think about the meaning of life.

Shi and two journalists in Taiwan revisited Sanmao's places to interview her surviving family members over the last three years. The author's brother and sister took them on a tour of some of the places the family had lived.

The interviews were the first time her family talked about her private life, including her love affair with a folk musician on the mainland, her short second marriage and the reasons for her suicide.

The book is called a geographical biography, because it tells the stories that happened at each place and also offers practical travel advice.

"Starting next June, mainland travelers will be able to freely cross over to Taiwan. The book will be a helpful travel guide for many of Sanmao's fans," Shi said.



台湾自由行首本最文艺路线图 用3天走遍三毛48年的人生

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独家推荐自由行文艺读本

Sanmao Taipei Map

By Shi Yonggang, Fang Xu and Feng Zhao, 222pp, Shang Dong Pictorial Publishing House, 39.8 yuan

Bookworm book listing

The Bookworm recommends the following titles to *Beijing Today* readers.

Ragnarok: The End of the Gods

By A. S. Byatt, 177pp, Canongate Books, \$17.85

During World War II, Antonia Byatt was given a book of Norse myths by her father. She read it and reread it, but there was one myth she was drawn to and which has continued to hold her under its spell: Ragnarok. It foretells the death of the gods Odin, Freya and Thor, the swallowing of the sun and moon by the wolf Fenrir and the crushing of the world by the Midgard serpent as he devours his own tail. It is only after monstrous death and destruction that the world can begin anew.

Into the Silence

By Wade Davis, 672pp, Knopf, \$32.5

This is a classic account of exploration and endurance. On June 6, 1924, two men set out from a camp on an ice ledge just below the lip of Mount Everest's North Col. George Mallory, at 37, was Britain's finest climber. Sandy Irvine was a young Oxford scholar of 22 with little previous mountaineering experience. Neither of them returned.

World and Town

By Gish Jen, 480pp, Vintage, \$15.95

Hattie Kong, a retired teacher and a descendant of Confucius, has decided that it is time to start over. She moves to the peaceful New England town of Riverlake, a place that once represented the rock-solid base of American life. Instead of quietude, Kong discovers a town challenged by cell-phone towers, chain stores and struggling farms. Soon she is joined by an immigrant Cambodian family on the run, and – quite unexpectedly – Carter Hatch, a love from her past.

(By He Jianwei)



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Designing Beijing's Development

By Chu Meng

The first Beijing Design Week is gathering some of the world's top designers to share their inspirational works from Monday through October 5. The event is one of many intended to mark the city's growing focus on developing its cultural industries.

The "Connecting Concept" exhibition by DutchDFA explores backstage stories about how ideas become designs.



"I think everyone, from the government to investors, realizes that creativity, design and innovation are going to be essential to China's future."



Dresses are being made with new material based on LED technology to change color according to the environment. The dresses are being displayed at the "Liberation of Light" exhibition.

Four hundred foreign designers. Ninety Chinese designers. Forums hosted by the chairmen from design weeks in London, Milan, Berlin, Helsinki and Seoul.

While many government-supported events fall short of expectations, the layouts, exhibitions and workshops at Beijing Design Week are surprisingly similar to what one finds abroad.

That may have been due to the personal experience of the week's general creative director, Aric Chen.

Chen, a 36-year-old Chinese American, moved from New York City, where he worked as a design writer and curator, to Beijing three years ago.

While in the US, he and his friend Tobias Wong were selected in 2008 to be the creative directors of 100% Design Fair in Shanghai, an experience that introduced Chen to life in China.

Chen said the first Beijing Design Week was held in conjunction with the International Council of Graphic Design Association in 2009. He had hoped to get involved in continuing the event, but was unsure how to develop it.

That was when Gehua, a state-owned enterprise and leading organizer of the design week, approached him with an offer for a position as general creative director.

"I'd moved to Beijing with no plans. I only knew I wanted to do something related to design. What that 'something' was, I had no clue," he said.

As a new Beijing Design Week came together, he found his calling.

"I think everyone, from the government to investors, realizes that creativity, design and innovation are going to be essential to China's future," Chen said.

But how to tailor a design week to suit China's comparatively young industry is a big challenge: design weeks have to be more than a platform for budding designers – they have to be a mechanism to strengthen the industry's infrastructure, he said.

During their two years of preparation, Chen and his team faced many difficulties.

Their first challenge was figuring out where to put everything. Beijing is a big, sprawling city, and they wanted design week to feel like a real event rather than something isolated and lonely.

"So we tried to create mini-hubs throughout the city to cluster everything together," he said. "Beijing is a city that's looking straight to the future, while remaining deeply rooted in its past. I think that's a great combination for generating something new and interesting in design. Like the city itself, design here is



Various vegetables can grow underground or in office buildings by absorbing light from LEDs.

a work-in-progress."

London was invited to be the first guest city at the design week. Related activities will be held at China Millennium Monument, Dashilar Historic Alley and 751 Design Park.

"Our core spirit for the design week and the triennial will be 'London-Calling,' named after an album by The Clash. Also, it fits with the spirit of the London 2012 Olympic Games," said John Sorrell, UK business ambassador and chairman of London Design Week.

Established UK designer Paul Cockledge is coming to Beijing Design Week with his "Manuscript." The 20-meter-by-6-meter installation is made of floating steel sheets inscribed with poems selected from English and

Chinese sources. It will be on display at the China Millennium Monument through October 7.

"London is a powerhouse of ideas. The city is home to an abundance of designers, architects, international studios, schools of design and leading curators and art critics. This diversity of thought and practice makes London an exhilarating place for design," Sorrell said.

But the Netherlands is actually the biggest participant in the design week if one measures by its exhibition area, number of events and visiting designers.

Its main exhibition pavilion, called the "Dutch Design Generator," is located in 751D-PARK.

It was converted from a 10-story abandoned electric generator used 40 years ago.

"We called it 'The Generator' because we hope it can serve as a generator for inspiration. It will also generate dialogue between the Chi-

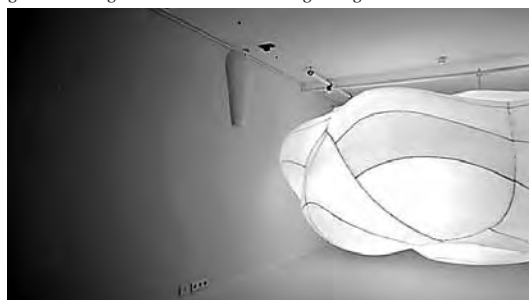
nese and Dutch designers," said Christine de Baan, program director of Dutch Design Fashion Architecture (DutchDFA) Project Committee.

The generator houses 30 objects that show off design concepts, processes and disciplines in the Netherlands.

The LED installation series "Liberation of Light" shows off the multitude of domains, ranging from health and food production to education and beautification, that are making use of LED technology.

"Beijing Design Week made great choices for its discussion topics, and the event has many new and invigorating designs and concepts," de Baan said.

"If this year works out, we plan to make Beijing Design Week an annual event with a new guest city and favored Chinese design institute each year," said Li Danyang, deputy director of the Beijing Design Week Organizing Committee Office.



"Breathing Cloud" imitates a woman's breath and interacts by circulating air and changing color.

Photos by Wu Haitong

Customized pearls and jewelry from Thaiv

By Annie Wei

From an early age, Wan Juan, founder of designer brand Thaiv, was intrigued by fine jewelry. But while she dreamed of becoming a jewelry designer, there weren't many opportunities for her in China 10 years ago.

After graduating as a fashion design major from Tsinghua's Academy of Art and Design, she said she traveled to Japan to learn more.

Thaiv was opened last August at Central Park as the culmination of a long journey. But it is also just the start.

Although the store isn't very glamorous, Thaiv has achieved a reputation as a fine retailer of quality pearls.

Wan said Thaiv has access to some of the best pearls in Asia. Wan's sister, Chen Ping, is a certified pearl master trained under Hiroshi Komatsu at the Pearl Science Laboratory in Tokyo.

The lab, established for more than 20 years, has certified just 100 students in its existence, Wan said.

"It's not a typical major, and few Chinese students want to learn it," Chen said.

Japan is much more advanced in the technology of pearl farming, Chen said. The Japanese have been doing it for more than 100 years, while the Chinese only started the trade in the 1970s, and targets bulk production for export.

Wan showed a newly finished pearl jewelry designed for brides. "Look at these pearls," she said. "Each is almost the same size, same color and very round."

Wan was especially proud of her design. "It's a very simple, modern design, inspired by the yin-yang symbol and looks like a Chinese knot frog," she said.

The piece is studded with small diamonds that complement – but do not overshadow – the pearls.

Other pieces include a pearl necklace that can be single- or double-layered. A big, shiny pearl from Thaiv starts from around 10,000 yuan and can be as expensive as 90,000 yuan. The bride necklace with a pair of earrings costs 168,000 yuan.

Thaiv

Where: Building 1, Room 105, Central Park, 6 Chaoyangmen Wai Dajie, Chaoyang District

Open: 9:30 am – 7 pm

Tel: 6533 6769



Thaiv's pearl necklace and earrings



Golden pearl ring



Pearls and diamonds together make for ultra luxury.



Black pearl ring



Diamond rings



Diamond cuff links



Wan's latest pearl necklace

Photos provided by Thaiv

Recommended Napa wines

By Annie Wei

The Napa harvest season starts next week. *Beijing Today* staff member Serena Qiu took a trip to Napa Valley last week and discovered why Napa wines are so rare in China – and why they're so exemplary.



One of the beautiful views of Napa Valley

Quality grapes make quality wine

By Serena Qiu

California might be the best state in the US: the weather's always nice, the sun seems to constantly shine and the people are gorgeous, partly the result of living a healthy lifestyle.

It's only fitting that Napa Valley, the leading wine-growing region in the US, would be found in California. Most of the wineries we visited were organic or biodynamic, part of a growing trend, producing wines that are of superior quality.

In Oakville Ranch Winery and Araujo Estate Wines, grape planters introduced how they built holes for owls and bluebirds to catch gophers and insects in the soil.

Pointing at the wild flowers under a grape vine, Phil Coturri, vineyard manager of Oakville, said those flowers helped him track insects. He also planted a variety of vegetables in the vineyards to fertilize the soil.

When we encountered grapes that were abandoned in the field, Coturri said these were left there to fer-

tilize the soil and nurture the next batch. These left-over grapes are treated with considerable care, which adds to the cost of most Napa Valley wines.

Napa's soils vary greatly, and grapes in different areas will taste differently because of temperature and exposure differences. It might be difficult for novices to tell the difference, but experts certainly can.

Denis Lin, a wine and spirit writer and educator based in Shanghai, said he was impressed by Napa's wine quality and its environment for growing quality grapes.

But so far, Napa wines haven't made much impact in the Chinese market.

Marcus Ford, director of Pudaow Wines, said Napa wines are still in their early days in China. Californian wines have a reputation for being "cheap and simple."

Napa produces some of the greatest wines in the world, Ford said. "We tasted an amazing array of some of the very best on our trip – when you

compare the price you pay for the absolute best of Napa, it is not expensive compared to Bordeaux or even Burgundy."

For example, Black Stallion, Mondavi and Hess Collection wines are available in China for less than 500 yuan – "an amazing offer for world-class wines," Ford said.

For high-end wines, Bond Estate's wine, given a rating of more than 95 points by Robert Parker and *Wine Spectator*, are available in China for around 4,800 yuan – about half the price of a poor vintage of Lafite or Latour.

Although Napa wines aren't as common in China, serious wine collectors know all about them.

"Their price versus quality is certainly reasonable," said Gregory De'eb, general manager of Crown Cellar, which provides cellar services to wine collectors in Hong Kong.

The best Napa wines also perform well at auctions and can be considered safe investments. They target high-end consumers that want only the best for their cellars or clients.



Legend Napa Wines available in China

People like Robert Mondavi, Mike Grigich and Warren Winiarski are legends of Napa Valley. Without them, Napa Valley wouldn't be what it is today.

Robert Mondavi Winery

Mondavi was a leading California vineyard operator. His way of labeling wines has become standard for New World wines. He has wineries, cellars and workshops open to tourists. Mondavi wines are available in Beijing through Jebson & Co.

Jebson & Co. Beijing

Where: Floor 10, Tower 2, Henderson Center, 18 Jianguomen Nei Dajie, Chaoyang District
Tel: 8519 8688

Grigich Hills Estate

Owner Mike Grigich, a Croatian American winemaker, escaped from Croatia in the 1950s to seek his dreams in Napa. He played an important role in the history of Napa Valley and became a global

wine vendor.

Grigich's Chardonnays won wine tastings in 1976, beating the best wines from France.

Grigich wines are available through Napa Reserve Fine Wines, based in Shanghai.

Napa Reserve Fine Wines

This company is mainly for retail. It offers Napa wines from places such as HALL, Long Meadow Ranch Winery, Honig Vineyard & Winery, PEJU, Staglin Family Vineyard and Viader Vineyards & Winery.

Where: 383 Weihai Lu, Jian'an District, Shanghai

Tel: 021-6340 0493

Stag's Leap Wine Cellars

This winery was established by Warren Winiarski and his family in the 1970s and sold in 2007. The 1973 vintage Cabernet Sauvignon won first place among 10 French and California red wines in a blind tasting in 1976. It currently has no China importer.



Photos provided by Napa Valley Vintners/CFP



Bringing alive the sounds of traditional Brazil

By Wei Xi

Brazilian culture isn't just about soccer, carnivals and samba. To really know it, you have to learn about the Brazilian life – a bamboo flute-like traditional instrument also called the pife.

And to hear its sounds from a musician as dedicated to the craft as Carlos Malta is to hear a bit of old Brazil come alive.



Carlos Malta (third from the left) and his band, Pife Muderno, in a performance at the Forbidden City Concert Hall last Friday.

Photos by Roger Tao

Carlos Malta, a Brazilian flutist and saxophonist, led his band, Pife Muderno, in a performance at the Forbidden City Concert Hall last Friday.

Malta drew a huge crowd, but very few people knew what to expect. Even a ticket receptionist had to ask, "What's tonight's performance about?"

Once the music started, everyone began clapping their hands, waving their arms and swinging their bodies to the rhythm. As Malta has said before, "There is no cold audience. If it happens, it is because the music is not good enough."

Born in Rio de Janeiro, Malta, 51, became interested in music at a young age. At 11, he began to learn the pife, a traditional Brazilian instrument.

"People in northeastern states like Ceara and Pernambuco often play it whenever there is a family

gathering, a ceremony or festival, or just whenever they want to have some music," he said.

"One day, when I was reading at a school library, I came across a book that had pictures of several flutists," Malta said. "I didn't know the instruments they were playing were called pifes, so I thought, 'Wow, these are flute heroes!'"

A man named Joao do Pife became Malta's idol, but Malta would go on to establish his own bona fides as a musician. He is known as the "man of seven instruments" for his mastery of woodwinds.

Malta has professional training, but a lot of times he is also heavily self-taught.

"I think by teaching myself, I learn more," he said. "Because when we are taught by a teacher, we often do the way as the teacher tells us. We find more

"One day, when I was reading at a school library, I came across a book that had pictures of several flutists. I didn't know the instruments they were playing were called pifes, so I thought, 'Wow, these are flute heroes!'"

inspiration and creativity when we study by ourselves."

He formed the band Pife Muderno in 1994 after much searching for the appropriate musicians.

The band members are all well known in their own rights, who are often busy with individual projects: flutist Andrea Ernest Dias; pandeiro (a kind of drum) players Marcos Suzano and Bernardo Aguiar; zabumba (a type of bass drum) player Durval Pereira; and percussionist Oscar Pellon.

"But each one takes time for group practice from time to time," Malta said. "Everybody sticks to the group, and we're proud of it."

Malta promotes traditional Brazilian culture, but also wants to add modern twists to the music. "Muderno," after all, means "modern."

He composes a unique fusion of popular Brazilian rhythms, folk

music and contemporary jazz.

Skilled listeners are also able to pick out musical influences from around the world.

"This is because Brazil is a migrant country, and its traditional culture, including its music, is a mix from different nations," Malta said. As a result, Pife Muderno musicians also use non-Brazilian instruments such as African drums, the dizi (Chinese transverse flute) and shakuhachi (Japanese end-blown flute).

To round out their performances, band members dance while on stage.

Pife Muderno has performed in several countries. It was nominated for a Latin Grammy in 2000.

"We hope to play as long as possible," Malta said. "We have made a commitment that comes from the heart."



Flutist Andrea Ernest Dias (left)



Pandeiro player Marcos Suzano (right)

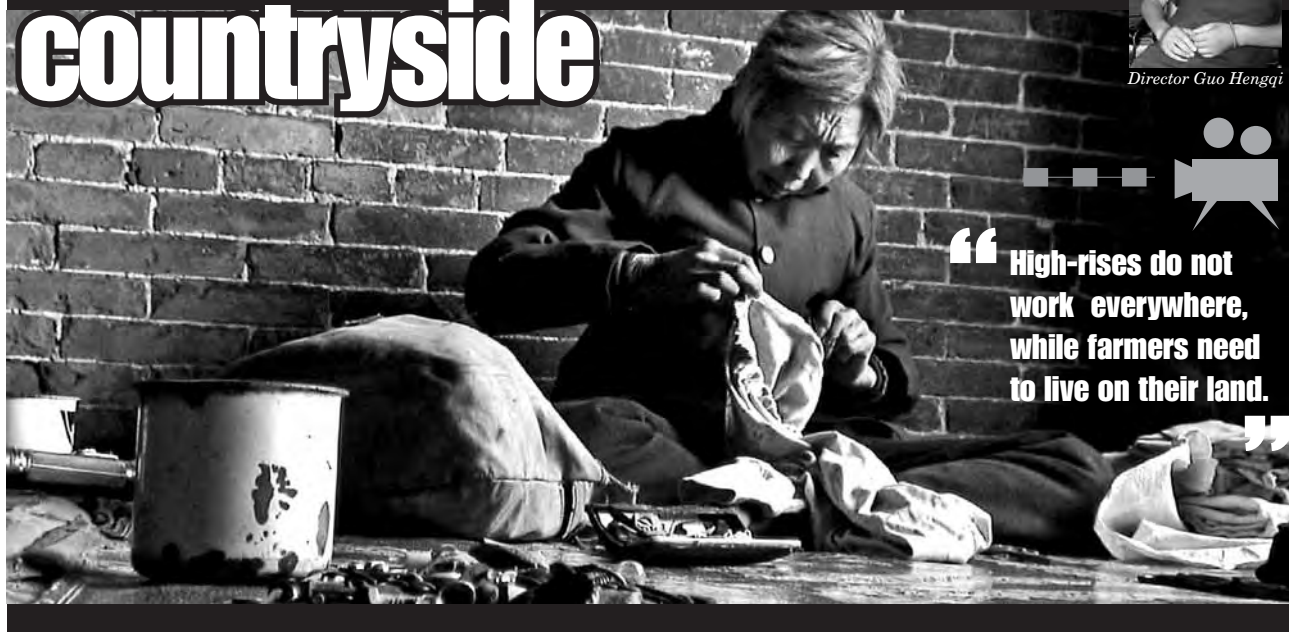
A death rattle from the countryside



Director Guo Hengqi



“High-rises do not work everywhere, while farmers need to live on their land.”



Director Guo Hengqi, born in 1979, is pretty much a native of Pingyao. Guo was born in Chenxi, a small village about 7 kilometers from Xinbu, where some of his relatives lived. Much of his childhood was spent on the streets of Xinbu, or “New Castle.”

Xinbu is an old village with hundreds of years of history. An elderly resident surnamed Han says it was founded by the Wangs; the Han family moved in later. Today, the Hans have 14 generations of descendants in the village.

But Xinbu is falling apart.

Many of the old villagers are leaving, and new high-rise buildings are replacing the cottages and caves that families have occupied through the centuries. The changes he saw on a visit home inspired Guo to tell the world Xinbu's story.

“What I saw made me worry about the decline of the countryside, as well as the rural culture that grew up around the village,” Guo says.

Guo began shooting *New Castle* in early 2008. He followed several households in Xinbu and recorded their lives for a year and a half. Usually, he chose to stand still with his camera, wordless, hoping his subjects would forget he was there.

The neighboring mine is where many young villagers go to work, but the frequent cave-ins have drastically thinned their numbers. One old woman in the film had two sons who died in the mine: her only compensation was two tricycle loads of coal.

To get stories from the mine, Guo went to live with current miners for two months. At

By Zhang Dongya

Director Guo Hengqi follows urbanization as it extends its tentacles into the remote mountain villages of Pingyao, Shanxi Province.

His recent film, *New Castle*, which was screened at Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA) in 798 Art District last Sunday, explores the fate of one village when its head forces through a policy to smash the villagers' homes and force them into poor-quality apartments.

For the people of Xinbu, the new homes do not mean a new future: they mean the death of their culture, and a road to despair and isolation.

the beginning, most of them did not like the director's intrusive nature, but he was eventually able to gain their trust and record how they work and where they sleep.

One of the reasons why they may have been so reluctant to let Guo in is that the mine is an illegal business. Its workers are poorly trained and as a result end up causing cave-ins and dying in horrible accidents.

Such an accident claimed the mobility of one young man, who today has to depend on a wheelchair. Since a mining accident crushed his lower back, the man has turned his home into an illegal gambling house for the younger villager.

Over exploitation of the mine has weakened the foundation of many village homes, causing numerous sink-holes and cracks. Villagers applied to the central government to get money to repair and rebuild their homes; instead, the village governor took the funds and began knocking down their old homes to replace them with high-rise buildings.

The new apartments, which began construction in 2007, can hardly be called habitable. They have no heating and no toilets, and a paltry three meters separates each.

Unsurprisingly, the villagers have been reluctant to vacate their land, where they have farmland, herds and big yards for storage.

“But rural life is being forced to change. The high-rise building life is too far removed from Xinbu's people, and the local government's actions have been shamefully ridiculous,” Guo said.

“When they are forced out, their rural traditions, customs and culture will vanish. All their lives, including weddings and funerals, will suffer for it,” he said.

“It will be the end of the rural community.” Every Spring Festival, the villagers hold a big ceremony called *Chuang Huanghe*, “brave the journey to Yellow River.” Villagers paste up couplets and local paintings and pray for safety and a plentiful harvest in the coming year. The men beat gongs and drums and sing folk songs with improvised lyrics.

Guo remembers the grand ceremonies of the past, but the 2009 ceremony that ends his film drew only a dozen villagers.

It was almost the last ceremony of the village.

In 2010, the local government tried to

force the villagers into the new buildings. Many continued to refuse. When their homes were demolished, the villagers chose to move in with their relatives or sleep inside the local elementary school.

“After losing their land, farmers turn into refugees. The farming culture is also disappearing,” the director said. “To some extent, over-exploitation of mines ruined their homes, but the governors' urbanization hastened the destruction.”

One old man has moved three times. He refused to move into a new apartment even as his yard was razed to the ground. For a while he lived in a partly-demolished cottage across from a ditch. Since that hut was demolished, he has been wandering the village and sleeping in empty yards.

“There are few people left in the village. [There are] no schools, so young couples leave with their children. No girls want to marry the young men in our village, and many of them are being killed in accidents. On average, we lose three people to the mine each year,” one of the old residents said.

Historical records trace Xinbu Village back to the Ming Dynasty. It was given its current name after 1949.

In 1980, the village had more than 140 households and some 400 people; today, there are fewer than 40 households and only a hundred villagers left.

New Castle is the first film by Guo, who won the Mecenat Award for Best Asian Documentary at the 15th Pusan International Film Festival last year. He is working on a second documentary about the closure of rural schools, a major problem in the countryside.



Guo Hengqi's film *New Castle* exposes the damage urbanization inflicts on rural communities.



Photos provided by UCCA

Avoiding the holiday crush while still having fun

By Zhang Dongya

National Day holiday is a time for travel, and you can expect Beijing's tourist sites to be packed with out-of-towners. For those who live in the city, *Beijing Today* would like to recommend these alternative places – from ancient villages to mountains – that will be less crowded but equally fun.



Liuliqu Village, once a production base for imperial families, still produces colored glaze today.

Photos by Mockingbird



A glaze village

Located by Yongding River in Mentougou is Liuliqu Village, first built in 1264 during the Yuan Dynasty (1206-1368). As its name indicates, "Colored-Glaze River Village" specializes in colored glaze.

At the entrance is a large archway with the inscription "cradle of colored glaze." Many buildings inside are decorated with colored glaze, making the whole village seem like a museum. A 107-meter colored glaze wall, built in 2006, is carved with different patterns and animals such as blue dragons and white tigers.

The village was once a production base of colored glaze for imperial families. Today, it is home to 300 households

and more than 1,000 villagers, about 300 of whom still produce colored glaze. It is said that about 80 percent of colored glaze tiles used for restoring ancient buildings are produced in Liuliqu Village.

At the east of the village is a famous arcade – a covered passageway called Guojielou – that is the only arcade in Beijing with a colored glaze top.

Getting there: Take Subway Line 1 to Pingguoyuan Station, then take Yuntong Bus 112, 336, 892, 929 or 977 to Shuizha stop. Or drive along Fushi Lu to Jinyuan Bridge, turn right at Shuangyu Huandao and go north to Sanjiadian Reservoir, then drive north for another kilometer.

Cangyan Mountain

In Jingxing County, Hebei Province is Cangyan Mountain, famous for its cliffs, which appear in the Ang Lee film *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*.

Cangyan Mountain features splendid mountain scenery, with ancient trees growing among vertiginous cliffs, waterfalls upon high peaks and clear valley springs.

Among the temples on the mountain is Fuqing Temple, which got its name during the Song Dynasty (960-1279). Entering its

gate, you will pass through a yard called Cangshan Shuyuan, or Cangshan Academy, which was built during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) and restored in Qing (1644-1911).

Not far from the yard are three large stone arch bridges, on which are two halls: the Hall of Heavenly Kings and Qiaolou (Bridge Building) Hall. Inside, the beams are intricately carved and the rafters painted with murals.

Continued on page 21...



Refined carvings are well-preserved on the old buildings at Cangyan Mountain.

CFP Photo



Cangyan Mountain is famous for temples built on cliffsides.

CFP Photo

...continued from page 20

Along the mountain road on the left side of Qiaolou Hall is a plank road built on a cliff. Across there is Nanyang Princess Ancestral Hall, a major part of Fuqing Temple, with the statue of a princess named Nanyang.

Legend has it that Nanyang was the daughter of Emperor Yang Guang in the Sui Dynasty (581-618). She married an official named Yuwen Shiji when she was 14, whose brother later killed her father in an act of revolt. The princess escaped to Cangyan Mountain and became a nun.

A Qing Dynasty emperor called the princess a Bodhisattva, thus solidifying her legend and popularity.

The valley in front of Qiaolou Hall includes sandalwood trees in various shapes and sizes. Locals have given them various names, such as Greeting-Guest, Crouching Tiger and Fairy Sandalwood.

There are also thousands of ancient cypresses. They come in different shapes, but they all have one thing in common: they lean toward the Nanyang Princess Ancestral Hall, prompting locals to say they are forever engaged in a "pilgrimage."

Getting there: Take the fast train to Shijiazhuang, which takes two hours and 15 minutes. Then take a bus to Jingxian County and then to Cangyan Mountain.

Admission: 50 yuan

Tel: 0311-8203 1189, 8202 2630



Birch forest in Huairou

In Labagoumen at the north end of Huairou is a large forest of poplar and birch trees, part of Labagoumen Forest Park. The leaves began turning yellow and red starting earlier this month.

Take your time walking through it. Unlike Xiangshan, a park that gets jammed with visitors around this time, Labagoumen Forest Park offers a more leisurely experience, a bit of serenity from hectic

everyday life.

Getting there: Take Bus 936-zhi to Labagoumen. Or drive along Jingshun Lu to Huairou County and head in the direction of Yanqi Lake. Drive along Jingfeng Lu to Liulimiao, then turn right to Tanghe Kou. Turn left toward Labagoumen.

Admission to Labagoumen Forest Park: 15 yuan



Labagoumen in Huairou is a good place to catch Beijing's autumn scenery.



The Xifengkou Great Wall is partially submerged in water.

CFP Photos



Xifengkou Great Wall

Located in Panjiakou Reservoir in Qianxi County, Hebei Province, Xifengkou Great Wall stands among glimmering water.

It was an important section during the Ming Dynasty, but it has never been officially restored. When the Panjiakou Reservoir was built in the 1980s, Xifengkou Great Wall became partially submerged in water.

Parts of the wall have long since broken down, a harsh reminder of the passage of time. During the dry season, when the water level goes down, visitors can see

more of the wall.

A single watchtower stands above water, with clusters of dry grass around it. From a distance, it looks like an isolated island.

Filmmaker Jiang Wen built a small village here to shoot a film in the late-'90s, which visitors can walk through.

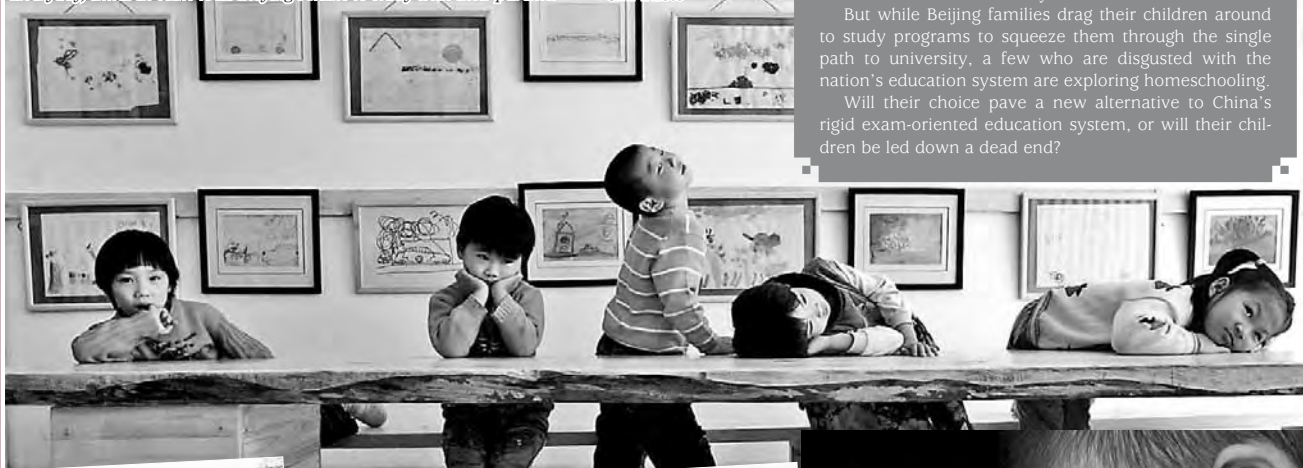
Getting there: Take Subway Line 1 to Sihui Station, then take a long-distance bus to Qianxi. It will take about three hours.

Admission to Panjiakou Reservoir: 15 yuan



Fed up parents discover home schooling

Everyday, children come to Li Tiejing's home to study with their parents. CFP Photo



Li Tiejing refused to send his son to a public elementary school.



Zheng Yuanjie, China's famous children's book writer home schooled his son Zheng Yaqi.

By Chu Meng

Education in a Chinese public school is a path with few options. Students and their families have little freedom to determine what they will learn.

But while Beijing families drag their children around to study programs to squeeze them through the single path to university, a few who are disgusted with the nation's education system are exploring homeschooling.

Will their choice pave a new alternative to China's rigid exam-oriented education system, or will their children be led down a dead end?

Eight-year-old Li Jingci spends less time in school classroom than her peers, but she learns much more.

Li's 36-year-old father, Li Tiejing, teaches her Chinese, math, painting, music and even astronomy in their three-room apartment in the Shangdu SOHO residential area of Chaoyang District.

From Monday to Friday, she is joined by four other children who come to her home with their parents to study.

"I read and do everything together with my daughter through means of interaction and involvement," Li Tiejing said.

"We are lucky to do all our work at home. We never really have 'homework' since we don't leave the house. We work through as much or as little material as we want, and the teachers don't punish us for not keeping up," said Wei Xixi, one of the 9-year-old students.

Wei has spent two and a half years being home-schooled by her mother, who says the nation's current education is a failure at helping a child's all-around development.

Li Jingci and Wei are not alone. Although there are no accurate statistics about home schooling, media reports suggest the trend is catching on.

Most parents who home-school their children – either by themselves or in homeschooling groups – make the decision because they do not believe their children can learn what they need in school.

"Most courses the school provides are useless for my child," Li Tiejing said. "I would rather teach her something useful myself instead

of wasting money on school."

Another characteristic of those parents, who are between the ages of 35 and 45, is that most of them completed their secondary education abroad.

"It wasn't until I was studying for my Master's degree in mass communication at UCLA that I realized what a detour it is to go through Chinese education," said Wei's mother, Ma Yixuan, who completed her undergraduate degree in international journalism at Communication University of China.

"Education, especially at an early age, should be based on one's natural process of being aware of the world, their own personality and free will, instead of rote repetition," the mother said.

When she got pregnant in her third year at UCLA, she read books about the education system used by foreign kindergartens and elementary schools.

"The more I learned, the more I realized that I could hardly agree with any teaching method I ever experienced in China. Each lesson in books was created only to help pass an exam," she said.

"High scores are the only goal of Chinese education. I am not going to make my child waste so much of her life in the country's 12-year university exam preparation process," she said.

She decided to join Li's group when moved back to Beijing in 2009. Originally for his own child alone, Li Tiejing's school began to accept other children in 2009. Today, it has six children in total.

The ceiling and walls are cov-

"We do not want to raise a genius, and getting into a Chinese university is not our ultimate goal for our children."

ered with star charts Li painted. A classical Chinese musical score hangs on the wall beside the window. The family's prized possessions are two violins and an electronic keyboard.

No desks or seats can be found. There is no class timetable broken down by hours. All teaching is based on the children's interests of the day.

"Most of our children are younger than 10. We have classes in English storytelling, Chinese literature appreciation, music and dance and learning about animals and the outside world," Li said. "The latter includes everything from physics and chemistry to painting."

"One advantage of our group is that most of the parents speak English fairly well. They can read stories with their children, and that helps the kids master the language gradually and unconsciously," Li said.

For Chinese practice, the home school selects Chinese editions of popular children's books, such as *Harry Potter* and *The Adventures*



Children make dumplings at home school.

CFP Photo

of *Huckleberry Finn*.

"Only through intensive reading and interest-driven learning can children's writing ability and literary appreciation be cultivated. That's something they will never get from reciting works of Lu Xun and Lao She," Li said.

Study periods vary. Some analytical or cognitive classes are shorter, to suit the children's shorter attention spans, while painting, reading and art are longer.

Rather than assign homework, the children are taken on field studies and to research assigned topics over weekend and holiday outings.

Li, Ma and some other parents are the children's only teachers at the moment, but they plan to hire professional tutors when the children get older and have to study more complicated topics.

"We do not want to raise a genius, and getting into a Chinese university is not our ultimate goal for our children," Ma said. "We keep her at home because

we believe that teaching methods should adapt to children's individual needs and nature."

But home schooling appears to fly in the face of the nation's Law of Compulsory Education.

The law states that the community, schools and families must ensure that children attend nine years of compulsory education from the age of six.

Tan Zongze, an associate professor at Southwest University of Political Science and Law, said in an interview with Beijing TV that parents and guardians can be forced to send their school-age children to accredited schools run by the government.

But Hao Youmin, vice headmaster of Yangfangdian Central Primary School in Beijing, said Tan's reading of the law is incorrect. "The law concerns those who provide no education for their children at all. However, parents who home school are often striving to give their children an even better education," she said.

Hotel



Savor French creations at the Shangri-La Hotel

French Chef Yannick Alléno brought his S.T.A.Y. dining concept to the Shangri-La Hotel, Beijing on September 16. S.T.A.Y., which stands for Simple Table Alléno Yannick, is a fun reinterpretation and exploration of traditional French cuisine.

The restaurant's new culinary and service team has been hand-picked by Chef Alléno. As the host of the first S.T.A.Y. Location in Asia, the Shangri-La Hotel is bringing a breath of fresh air to the Beijing fine dining scene.

Rent



Cozy home at Le Lemman Lake

This nice beautiful house has recently been redecorated. The 315-square-meter interior includes three bedrooms, two living rooms, three bathrooms, a study and a finished basement with a cinema, bar and entertainment area.

The home has a garden and comes fully furnished with new appliances.

Monthly rent is 20,000 yuan, including management fees and invoices.

Tel: Sophia, 13911403359, 13910034480
Email/MSN: sophialeasing@live.cn

High-end three-bedroom apartment at China Central Place

This three-bedroom apartment is located at China Central Place (Huamao). It has two bathrooms, a big, south-facing living room, a nice kitchen with an oven and a storage room. The apartment is on the 20th floor and has a nice view.

The unit comes with basic appliances, broadband Internet and cable television. Rent is 18,000 yuan per month, including heating and management fees. Extra furniture can be arranged upon request.

Tel: 1369 329 4779

Language Exchange

Weekend Chinese class in Sanlitun

Learn Chinese on the weekend in group classes with professional teachers who are passionate about Chinese as a second language.

After class, stick around to have some fun in Sanlitun. Regardless of your current Chinese ability, you're sure to improve and learn correct pronunciation.

Classes cost 60 yuan per hour.

Website: mychinesestudy.com

Tel: 8590 0698/0898

Event

Children stage Peter Pan musical

Come enjoy Beijing's best child actors at a live stage rendition of *Peter Pan* at the Canadian International School Theater at the Lufthansa Center.

The performers are members of Youth Academy of Dance, Beijing's award-winning premier dance school for children that transforms shy kids into center stage actors.

The event is a Peter Farrell production starring children between the ages of 3 and 10. The play is an hour long and seats are limited.

Parents are asked to encourage the imaginations of their children at this musical production.

Tel: 5928 2110

Email: promoreservations@gmail.com

Ticket: 20 yuan

Dinning

Summer Palace the place for oysters

Canadian oysters, one of the finest foods, are arriving in Beijing via the Summer Palace this October. For deliciously delicate dishes that match the oysters' tender and juicy flavor, try Master Chef Kenny Chen and Xing Qinghou's creations.

Their special menu includes pan-fried Canadian oysters with matsutake mushrooms in abalone sauce, baked Canadian oysters with garlic and black bean sauce and steamed Canadian oysters with Thai chili and black bean sauce.

Where: China World Hotel, Beijing, 1 Jianguomen Wai Daijie

When: October 1-31

Tel: 6505 2266 ext. 34

Airline

Garuda Indonesia adds Orient Holidays



National flag carrier Garuda Indonesia launched a new package tour center in Shanghai last week. The trips, arranged by Garuda Orient Holidays in collaboration with the domestic travel agent Ctrip, are targeted to premium travelers and people with an interest in adventure, diving and eco tourism.

The Chinese mainland is Garuda's next target, having established similar operations in Australia, Korea, Japan, Hong Kong and several European countries.

Garuda Orient Holidays plans to open more branches in Shanghai, Beijing and Guangzhou. Its goal is to attract as many as 3,000 Chinese tourists to Indonesia each month.

Information about the packages, including flight times and recommended hotels, is available online. Customers can arrange their own travel itineraries and plan a cost-effective trip.

Jetstar offers lowest fares to Singapore, Melbourne



Jetstar is offering some of the best fares ever from Beijing to Singapore and Beijing to Melbourne.

The airline's fares are up to 60 percent lower than competing carriers, with Economy fares starting from 488 yuan to Singapore and from 1,888 yuan to Melbourne with a layover in Singapore, Chief Commercial Officer David Koczkar said.

The availability of yuan fares on the Chinese version of Jetstar.com makes it easier for Chinese customers to book flights on Jetstar's growing pan-Asian network.

To make booking more convenient, Jetstar is cooperating with Alipay to allow the agency's 600 million registered users to pay for flights directly from their Alipay accounts.

Starting today, Alipay users can purchase Jetstar fares on all Chinese international routes. Long-haul service to Melbourne will begin in November, bringing the airline's number of Chinese international routes to nine.

(By Jackie Zhang)

Dance

Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo

Founded in 1974 by a group of ballet enthusiasts to present playful and entertaining interpretations of traditional and classical ballet, this New York all-male company is noted worldwide for its comic approach and the astounding fact that all its men dance en pointe. The company's purpose is to bring the pleasure of dance to the widest possible audience. This show will feature five pieces selected from *Swan Lake*, *Go for Barocco*, *Pas de Quatre*, *Dying Swan* and *Raymonda's Wedding*.

Where: Mei Lanfang Theater, 32 Ping'anli Xi Dajie, Xicheng District

When: 7:30 pm

Admission: 120-880 yuan

Tel: 6551 6930

Fri, Sept. 30



Sat, Oct. 1



Dance

Girl! Woman!

This is the latest work from the local modern dance company SMX Studio. Two female dancers depict the joys and sorrow of a girl's coming-of-age, expressing real-life struggles, hopes and expectations.

Where: Nine Theater (TNT), Chaoyang Culture Center, 12 Jintai Li, Chaoyang District

When: 7:30 pm

Admission: 100-200 yuan, 50 yuan for students

Tel: 8599 1188

Exhibition

Landscape of Spirit

This exhibition presents more than 150 pieces by 30 Chinese designers and groups who return to their cultural roots and "design for the sake of design." The designers in the exhibition have created a traditional garden filled with their work, such as furniture, accessories and daily items.

Where: China Shijitan Contemporary Art Center, 9 Fuxing Lu, Haidian District

When: Until October 3, daily, 10 am - 6 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 5980 2233



Nightlife

Spring and Autumn

This local band was started in 2000 by veteran rocker Kaiser Kuo, who earlier founded China's first heavy metal band Tang Dynasty. Spring and Autumn, whose latest album is *Gate of Space and Time*, is strongly influenced by metal groups, integrating hard rock with folk.

Where: Gulou 121 Bar, 121 Jiu Gulou Dajie, Xicheng District

When: 9:30 pm

Admission: 40 yuan advance purchase, 50 yuan at the door

Tel: 8404 3430

Sun, Oct. 2

Nightlife

Pairs

This Shanghai-based punk duo released its debut album last September. It will perform with four other bands: Cas-sette, Me Too, Next Years Love and Illness Sickness.

Where: Mao Livehouse, 111 Gulou Dong Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: 9 pm

Admission: 40 yuan advance purchase, 50 yuan at the door

Tel: 6402 5080

Mon, Oct. 3



Exhibition Commemoration - 10th Anniversary of Soka Art Beijing

The first exhibition Soka hosted was *Pioneers of Western Art* in 2001. At that time, Soka was one of the city's four galleries run by non-Beijingers. This latest exhibition is a look back at Soka's past 10 years in Beijing.

Where: Soka Art Beijing, 798 Art District, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Changyang District

When: Until October 23, daily except Monday and Tuesday, 10 am - 6 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 5978 4808

Wed, Oct. 5



Tue, Oct. 4

Exhibition

Sterling Ruby: Vampire

American artist Sterling Ruby employs a wide array of materials as his creative media. In this exhibition, he presents new works, including urethane stalagmite sculptures, spray-painted geometric sculptures resembling civic monuments, hallucinogenic color-field canvases, hand-wrought ceramics and bronze, basin-like sculptures. Ruby's creation leaves viewers feeling cold and violent tendencies. For him, destruction is transformed into a process of construction and fabrication. In this exhibition, he exposes the collision between superpowers and developing countries in the age of globalization.

Where: Pace Beijing, 798 Art District, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until November 5, daily except Monday, 10 am - 6 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 5978 9781

Thu, Oct. 6

Movie

Reservoir Dogs (1992)

This American crime film is the debut of director and writer Quentin Tarantino. It depicts what happens before and after a botched jewelry store heist.

Where: Club 3, 43 Bei Sanhuan Xi Lu, Haidian District

When: 7:30 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 8211 5288

(By He Jianwei)

